Peter Siegfried Krug – My Life as a Poem (Lyric Prose)

(Revision and improvement, December 02, 2025) The original is preserved on archive.org.

Birth A life. Frozen, shattered, brittle, yet hopeful. November 23, 1966, 2:45 a.m. Salzburg State Hospital, Müllner Hauptstraße 48

A child born without welcome. No father, no grandparents. No name to keep him from falling. Only Herta Brigitte Krug, his mother, 22, untrained, alone, deeply sad. Later Herta Bertel – married, Goethestraße 12, second floor, Itzling, anonymous.

Dr. Peter Strobl, blond, tall, married, Kitzbühel, danced together 1962–1966, advised abortion. She stayed silent, kept the helpless child. Demanded no money, carried the birth alone, full of pain.

1966–1968 Cold infant home, near the hospital. Two years without arms that stayed to warm him. Unknown. Grandmother from Lessach: born before the war, deaf-mute, simple. Kirchenstraße 33, Itzling. No photo. Peter helpless, next to Aunt Olga – the only support in the home. Peter remained, with the echo of a first cry that no one caught.

Kirchenstraße 33, Itzling, 1968–1972 Four years behind bars without bars. Every morning malt coffee, the same taste as yesterday and the day before. No friend. No hand that stayed. Dreams were all he had.

The daily routine like clockwork: Breakfast 7:30, lunch 12:00, bedtime 7:30 p.m. No hiding place, only the garden with the same trees.

Once, a young woman grabs the four-year-old by the arm, drags him down the stone stairs. Wooden door, simple lock. Click. Darkness. Only a sliver of light through which she smokes and waits, then disappears. His knees shake for days, the dreams scream at night.

Another night: ten, fifteen children on the floor. “Now the devil will come get you.” Lights out, garden

door left open, footsteps walk away.

Christmas. Others are picked up. Not him. Peter stands at the window, waiting for his mother. Goethestraße 12. It is already dark. She doesn't come. The door accidentally left ajar a crack. He runs up Sportplatzstraße, right into Goethestraße and rings the bell. She opens the door only a finger's width: "Go back." Door slammed shut.

He walks away. Four years old. Alone in tears, staring at the ground. Destroyed on the floor. Later, almost six, he is allowed to walk to her alone on weekends. 80 meters of freedom – and back again.

Guggenthal 62 / Georg-Weickl-Weg 21, 1972–1978 Six years and a few months old. Nothing belongs to him. No photo of the father. No word about him.

The forest begins right behind the door, up to the invisible border. Barefoot on beech leaves, jumping over meter-high rocks, hunting trout in the stream, paper planes in the autumn wind. Lederhosen, no shoes. That was freedom.

Inside: educator Margarete Leitner, 1930–2018, called "Mama." Chair, broom, belt, hand – sudden impulsive blows. Every single evening. 7 p.m. circle in the hallway. Hands folded. Lord's Prayer, Creed. Peter feels sick, cannot escape.

Sunday 8:30 a.m., 300 meters slow steps to Heilig-Kreuz Church. Front pew in the church. Hans Paarhammer preaches. Hell, devil, amen. Peter counts the minutes until the forest.

Ajax, the collie, only barks when fed, never lets himself be petted.

Elementary school Guggenthal, 100 meters away. Anna Karl, Hugo Müller, two teachers for four grades. 7:40 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., red and green triangles stay gray for Peter. Worst grades. No one asks why. Punishment: counting pine cones, or writing the same sentence a hundred times. "I am stupid and don't know why." Forest ban. Beatings. Panic and flight.

Secondary school Hof, bus ride, nausea. No friends. “The Little Match Girl” – half the story, tears, blank lines, worst grade. No one asks. Night after night: tinnitus, hyperventilation, tingling in the face, choking attacks, fear of dying.

One night: no voice left, collapses unconscious on Adi Hillimaier’s bed. Ambulance, at night. Hospital. Dr. Christian Gross, wrong diagnosis of epilepsy. Pills go into the trash. Attacks stop. Cause remains unnamed. Peter is taken away, new home, everything new, no one holding on, no one asks.

Parsch, Aignerstraße 7a, 1978 Across from the Borromäum. Twelve years old. No more beatings. No more choking attacks. Pills secretly into the trash.

The other children mock him, exclude him. Cast out. Unhappy, alone.

Schloßstraße: instead of going to school, into the grocery store. Two bottles of orange juice concentrate stolen, some candy. A few months, then he’s thrown out.

At the same time Herta Brigitte Krug marries Dr. Michael Bertel. For her, Peter is now only a failure. Problem child. Nothing more.

Zanderstraße 5, Liefering, 1978–1980 No forest, only the Salzach lakes in the distance. Chessboard from the psychologist: 64 squares of order in a life without rules.

School: children from other countries, no German, no demands, no learning. Gerold and Annamaria Ladinig sleep late. Elvis movies run. Bread is often missing. Hunger. Once stolen wafers eaten in the toilet.

Gerold comes home late, bricklayer, tiler, alcohol, muscleman, fist hardened by concrete. Beatdowns follow a ritual, in front of Annamaria, naked on the bed. Wet hands, brutality until screaming. Nights, cigarette stench, tattoos of a stranger. Blanket pulled away, sexual acts repeated for weeks until Gerold catches the man and beats him in front of Peter.

One evening for no reason: fist in the face, nose bleeds into the soup, second fist, third, Peter unconscious on the floor. No home left – 20 kilometers on foot, Liefering – Salzach – Gaisberg, steep uphill, off-trail. Evening sun suddenly goes out, grasses stop glowing. Wind like from a blowgun, loose stones, slippery moss, 1288 meters, alone at the top. Storm, thick clouds, rain, only a T-shirt. Soaked through. Only at the very top, completely alone: I can do something, I am stronger… Darkness comes quietly.

Down again, back to the old forest near Guggenthal, to Adi Hillimaier, Daniel Spitzl. Hope for an Indian hut, for bread, for sleep under raw branches. Betrayal: the children show Margarethe Leitner the place. She thinks he came because of her. Calls Herta Bertel, police arrive. Herta (mother) scolds the whole ride: “Just a troublesome child.” Back to Zanderstraße. Gerold is already waiting, furious… No one asks why he ran.

Quellenweg 3, Plainfeld, 1981–1982 East of Salzburg. Fifth school. Last two compulsory years. No beatings. No rape. No nighttime escape. For the first time: air.

Secondary school Hof. Solidarity. No mockery. Hermann Hautzinger across from him, the chessboard between them. First friend ever. Chess in Salzburg province, Peter almost always wins. But who cares?

No book in the house. Television is king. German shaky, English almost zero.

Apprenticeship instead of the hoped-for higher school: First try: freight company – alarm clock rings, eyes burn, too late, fired. Second try: Goldener Hirsch – hands shake while pouring, plate falls, everything over. Third try: Peterskeller – heavy trays crash down, other apprentices laugh, he disappears in shame, tells no one.

Monika Mittermayr drops Peter.

Kolpinghaus, 1982–1983 Iron beds creak like old ones. Floor smells of old plastic. I lie awake. Hunger has its own sound.

The machine spits out stickers. One after another. I no longer count them. Only the days. And they are empty like a vacuum.

Monika hands Peter over like a package nobody wants. Franz-Josef-Straße 15. Door closed and forgotten.

Abba, his favorite music, falls silent forever. Hermann is gone. Forever. The folding bike rusts somewhere. I have nothing left to lose. Only myself.

At night I lie in the dark in the iron bed. White pieces move through my head. No board. Only in the head: Ke3, Qf8, Nd7, Ng6, Kd5 Nb7, Nc6, Ba7,… Mate in two. Zugzwang, exactly like me.

The sugar clumps between my fingers. White like chess pieces. I eat it by the spoonful. It tastes of nothing. And of everything.

In Café Mozart it smells of coffee and losers. Lights go out. Henri Prodinger spits on the board. We keep playing in the dark. No one else is there. I win. He doesn't pay the agreed thousand.

I take the spare key with me, like a last black bishop. Eventually, after repeated night visits and inedible cakes, I throw the key into the Salzach. It slips away silently. At night – from the bridge. Like everything else. But a part of me remained there. Between iron beds, cold cakes and a black-and-white board that no one sees, only he does in his head. At night I climb through the window. The cakes are sweet and have become inedible. I keep eating sweet cake hastily, so much until I almost vomit. Then the jump from the window into the depths. Five meters onto asphalt. My heart races. Fear.

Locked in the Niederleghof. Waiting from two to six. Hidden between garbage cans and pigeons. The city sleeps deeply. But I no longer do. Eyes and ears wide open… Man opens the gate. Peter slips away unnoticed into nothing, no, into the Kolpinghaus, and disappears into the iron bed.

Guggenthal, many years ago Three names no one says aloud anymore.

Adi Hillimaier sleeps ten winters between ash and maple. With a dog as his only blanket. Fire crackles small. He says the cold extinguishes the bad memories. A knife still finds his belly. Adi survives.

Forty years later he sees his mother, as if on a screen. They do not recognize each other. Extinct volcano covered with snow.

Daniel Spitzl, soft voice – dark Turkish eyes disappears in the corridors of the Borromäum. After that even quieter. The sharp needles into his veins. Faster than any word. He was twenty – and then nothing more. Never again.

Reinhard Tutschko throws children down in judo. A theft, handcuffs, Schanzlgasse 1, cell. Belt becomes a noose. Hanged. The saving door too late. Twenty years old, just like Daniel. Dead forever.

Three children, suppressed memory. Their names still lie on the forest floor of Guggenthal, between the roots that no one digs up.

Margarete Leitner Margarete moves. New house on the Saalach riverbank. Rechte Saalachzeile, garden, pension, silence. Bavaria lies opposite. Not one former home child visits her, except Peter after more than forty years. She does not speak of the beatings. No regret. No memory. Everything forgotten. Dementia eats her completely. In 2016. Her husband Josef blind. Nursing home in Itzling together. Learned nothing, repressed everything, forgotten everything. She dies in 2018. Eighty-eight.

Gerold Ladinig keeps drinking, mostly beer. Rage breaks out, fists fly. Drunk, he tells of boys under blankets beneath which blows rained. Proud of himself, apprentice despite the home. Muscles of steel, black hair. Knows no apology, only justification for brutal blows… Leukemia gets him. 2003. Fifty years old. Shortly before death: finally remorse. No one visits his grave in Maxglan.

…April 2024 Herta, his mother, dies – almost alone. Only her husband left. After two years of hip torment. Eighty years old. The secret dies with her. But not completely!

Later improvement – Gaisberg scene, revised version

The next day no more school path: only the thought of leaving, far away, where no one yells, where no one asks.

Twenty kilometers, Liefering – Salzach – Gaisberg. The asphalt patters, wet and cold, the city rushes behind him like a breath that does not belong to him.

The evening sun suddenly tips, as if God turned off the light. The grasses lose their glow, become dull, gray, as if the day were offended.

The wind comes whistling, aims like from a blowgun at neck and chest. Loose stones roll, moss turns treacherous under the soles. The path grows narrower, colder.

1288 meters, alone at the top. The sky tears open, clouds like heavy doors. Storm, rain, only a shirt. Rain pelts down on Peter who doesn't know whether to stand still or disappear.

Yet right there, where others would turn back, he feels it for the first time: I can do something. I am stronger than they think.

The wind almost pushes him back, but he stays, as if he has to prove that there is at least one place where no one stands above him.

Then the descent, through wet grass, over roots that grow like veins from the ground. Down, farther and farther, toward the forest, toward childhood, toward Guggenthal.

Back to the old forest, where the trees knew him before people ruined him. To Adi Hillimaier, to Daniel Spitzl, to the hope for a hut, a piece of bread, a few hours of sleep under branches that do not strike.

The forest does not betray him — but the children do. They show Margarethe Leitner the place. She

believes he came because of her, and calls his mother. Police. Blue lights without questions.

Mother scolds the whole ride: “just a troublesome child.” Back to Zanderstraße. Gerold is waiting. And again no one asks why he went up the mountain.

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